

U.S. acts to foil copying-machine counterfeiters

By Roger Boye

Secret Service agents last year seized nearly 3,200 counterfeit bills made on color copying machines, a total that concerns government experts.

"The timing [of currency changes] will be just about right," said Jack Taylor, a U.S. Secret Service spokesman. "Technological advancements in copiers are creating a threat."

During 1987, Uncle Sam will issue the first greenbacks designed to foil "casual counterfeiters" using sophisticated copiers. Among other things, the U.S. Treasury will print currency on paper containing a clear polyester thread that should prove difficult to duplicate on the office Xerox.

Overall, the Secret Service confiscated 1.3 million "funny bills" worth \$68.6 million in the 1985 fiscal year. Nearly 182,000 of those bills had been passed into circulation.

Despite the increasing threat from people using copying machines, offset printing remains the most popular method of counterfeiting. In fiscal year 1985, for example, offset presses created more than 90 percent of bogus bills seized by the government while black-and-white and color copiers produced just 2½ percent.

Taylor added that in 1985, the Secret Service closed 104 counterfeiting operations using offset printing equipment and 12 using copying machines. Also, agents are finding an increasing number of bogus \$50 and \$100 Federal Reserve notes in circulation, although counterfeit \$20s still are most common.

● Three soldiers and a combat helicopter are depicted on a new government medal honoring veterans of the Vietnam War.

The design—modeled after an award-winning photograph taken in Vietnam during 1967—was one of nearly 800 submitted to the government during a national competition last year. The medal's tails side praises the men and women who fought in the war.

Treasury Department workers are selling three-inch bronze specimens in high relief for \$16 each and 1½-inch bronze specimens for \$2.25. To order, send a check or money order—made payable to the United States Mint—to the mint at P.O. Box 500, Philadelphia, Pa. 19105.

Congress passed legislation authorizing the medals in 1984.

● The British Royal Mint is offering to collectors an informative guide to British coinage. The cardboard "window chart" includes color pictures of nearly 60 coins produced from the first century B.C. to 1983.

For a copy, write to the British Royal Mint, 250 W. 57th

Continued on page 46